

If there's one thing we've learned from all the TV coverage from Iraq, it is that the impact of images on a screen does not approach the impact of those on a printed page. We saw devastation; live bombing, "embedded" footage of the action whenever it happened. In fact, for each five minutes of coverage watched, you saw a minimum of 900 separate images. (Each image takes 1/30 of a second to scan your TV set.) You probably wouldn't have wanted to see any one of those images for 5 minutes. There were, however, some terrific still photographs taken during the struggle, many of which you could look at for 5 minutes or more, and still be haunted by the images days later. Such is the power of the still photograph, regardless of whether it started out on film or digital memory card.

As more and more of you are getting involved with digital photography and home printing, we have heard a few questions asked again and again. Here are some of the most common:

"How long do digital prints last?" Here comes the world's favorite answer ... it depends". There are different types of digital prints made today, so let's examine each.

For years, negatives have been printed on color (or black and white) photo paper. The paper contains dyes, is light sensitive, is inexpensive to produce in large quantities, and has good image stability. This paper must be handled and processed in just about total darkness, so home printing was never popular (or very exciting). The paper can be exposed by an analog light source (a bulb), or a digital light source (like a document scanner in reverse). Because this technique has been around for about 50 years, it is well established as the baseline by which other photographic prints are measured.

Most of you have heard of, and have probably used, an inkjet printer. Most inkjets are hooked up to a personal or business computer and can be used for printing text as well as photos. Some inkjets, pioneered by Epson, were designed specifically for printing photographs. These printers tend to use 6 or more colored inks (one of which is black). The ink is sprayed by tiny jets through even tinier nozzles onto the paper in extremely small droplets – some printers boast over 28,000 droplets to the inch, but we've never counted them. The inks were created to be sprayed onto specific papers. When using a high quality inkjet photo printer (starting at about \$99), the manufacturers' inks and high quality inkjet photo paper, prints now last longer than 70 years! Mismatching inks and papers can show deterioration overnight. Several model printers have the computer software in them, so they can print directly from your camera or memory card – no regular computer necessary!

Many people use laser printers with their computers. While there are many color laser printers (and their sisters, color copiers), none have what is considered true photographic realism.

The last type of printer is called dye sublimation (derived from a process called dye sublimation wax transfer). These printers are exclusively for printing photographs. In this process there is a donor (ribbon) and receiver (paper or film). In use, the image is scanned onto a primary color ribbon made of dye embedded plastic. This is heated and impressed onto the paper. It must go through the printer 3 or more times, 1 for each primary color and usually one for a UV inhibiting sealer coat. These are the printers that are in copy stations, such as we have in our stores. Without a loupe (magnifier) these prints look identical to conventional, photo paper prints and have a long life span. In the 10 years or

so that we've had these printers in our stores, no person has complained about a faded print. Until recently, these printers were unaffordable for home use, but now are available for under \$260. These printers can also be used without a regular computer. One model is even available in a 12 volt version for printing in your car or boat.

In our stores, we use both inkjet and dye sublimation printers for your photos. Our newest machines print directly from memory cards or prints, with printing times in seconds instead of minutes (in **the Photo Summit**). Both stores can also make inkjet prints for you, as large as 24"x90" (in **Madison PhotoPlus**). We choose materials designed for longevity, not the lowest cost.

We welcome Jerrilyn to our staff at the Photo Summit. Jerrilyn has a B.A in Media Arts from Long Island University and was general manager of LIU-TV, the campus TV station. She has worked as an assistant teacher at the International Center of Photography in New York City, as well as a freelance photographer. Her photos have been exhibited and published. Jerrilyn is also involved in a community mentoring program, using photography as her specialty. Please welcome her your next time in Summit. She'll be easy to recognize – she's the one you haven't seen before!

If any of you are having a graduation in your family this or next month, and would like a reprint of our article on graduation photography, please e-mail Jerry at jerry@madisonphoto.com for a copy.

Jerry & Lynne

p.s. Remember the tiny Pentax Optio S digital camera we mentioned a month or 2 ago? Here's a shot we took with it a couple of weeks ago. We hope you enjoy it.

